



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

DIPLOMADO

**“LIFELONG PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
EMPOWERING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS”**



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**A statement submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Foreign
Language Teaching Program**

MENTOR

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Our Leadership Profile



Our inspiration as future leaders in the educational field is to involve ourselves in leading processes in order to provide improvement to the field we are willing to change. We count on a great capability to work as a team to help the people around us. We are empathic, flexible, innovative, and above all, we are dreamers who look for the wellbeing of our students. These abilities will guide us to think positively for our students as the learners striving for knowledge that they are. Our main objective is to provide benefits to students and at the same time to encourage the people around us to look for the same. Once our objective is achieved, we are committed to keeping working hard for the future of education and the future of our students whom we expect to have a significant experience of their learning.

“Leadership is not for everyone, but for those who are willing to dedicate themselves to others.” -Baquero & Cantero, *Personal Leadership Statement*.





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Abstract

Society always seeks changes that require innovative ideas that contribute to constant development. It is the same for schools, education is changing as well as students are teachers have the duty to create strategies that elicit a balance in education. In this paper, we will be covering aspects of teaching leadership and empowerment leadership. We will show how leadership contributes to education and the welfare of students, and teachers. The main idea of the paper is to promote better teaching performance through leadership as the principal reason for teachers' initiative to transform their educational environment because what is necessary for school is not changing but transforming into something new and better for the future.

Keywords: *leadership, empowerment, teaching, educational leadership.*





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Introduction

Leadership is nowadays considered one of the most important skills of the last century. It is present in our everyday life and happens in every place from a simple classroom to a big company. According to Daft (2008), Leadership involves influence, it occurs among people, and those people intentionally desire significant changes, and the changes reflect purposes shared by leaders and followers. In this sense, leadership is not only making individual decisions but working according to what surrounds us to achieve objectives and purposes; leadership is about how much we can inspire the ones who surround us.

Anyone can be a good leader by following appropriate approaches and beliefs. Daft (2008) expressed, “Rather than looking at an individual’s personal traits, the behavior approach says that anyone who adopts the appropriate behavior can be a good leader (p. 4) This means that being a leader does not require specific conditions, such as socioeconomic status, ethnic or gender. In other words, there is appropriate and exact behavior for a leader to be a leader. Teachers, employees, bosses, mothers, fathers, anyone can be a good leader just by having the skills and the willingness to be one. In consonance with Mott (2006), a leader should be willing to challenge both self and others to provide the best care possible, to set high standards, and at the same time, to encourage, support, and reward those working with him or her” (p. 456). Therefore, a leader should be an individual who thinks





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collectively to provide the best solutions and strategies that, apart from solving a certain problem, influence the ones that are around him. A real leader is wise enough to know that by encouraging the people around him or her, he or she will create opportunities to reinforce the group, solve problems and achieve positive outcomes not individually, but as a group.

As mentioned above, a leader can be in every place such as schools or companies. Education leaders are the ones who provide tools and ideas to students and schools. Modise (2019) said, “In an educational environment the leadership that exists ought to have a positive influence on the outcomes of the organization and, therefore, impact positively on learners”. (p. 118). This means that the tools and ideas an educational leader provides will have to impact positively on learners. If this is not the case, then there would not be an exercise of leadership in the school environment and as a result, there will not be changes in the organization or learners. Modise (2019) also argued, “Therefore, the most important task that leaders in the ECD field can undertake is to advance and improve the teaching and learning milieu so that it is of a high quality” (p. 117) Thus, a pedagogical leader that impacts positively is a leader who achieves a high-quality level of teaching and learning. This is a goal to which educational leaders should be committed.





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Our Assumptions

Being a leader is assuming the responsibility of what we do will influence people around us. That is to say, leadership is the role of influencing the people around us through actions. Treslan (2006) saw leadership as “a relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest” (p. 68). That is why it is important for us as leaders to take into account that the perceptions and values that we have will define the image that people have about us and the attitudes towards the goals and processes that we want to achieve. In this regard, our assumptions are established conceptions regarding education where leaders can act as a guide not only for students but for the whole educational organizations to which leaders are related. These established conceptions are defined as values that are understood as the ideas, desires, and attitudes of an individual that defines his or her course of action (Haydon, 2005). As future leaders of educational processes, it is essential that we align our assumptions with the needs and objectives of the community we are leading to achieve the goals. Otherwise, the process will be a struggle of will between what is desired and the attitudes we have to reach it.

Leading a process does not mean that the will of the leader will be imposed on the people around them, on the contrary, the leader should consider the perceptions of the





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group. Joseph et al. (2015) stated that good leadership consists of four dimensions as follows.

(a) idealized influence, or the extent to which a leader displays conviction and behaves in a way that causes followers to identify with him/her, (b) inspirational motivation, which involves communicating optimism and challenging followers to meet high standards, (c) intellectual stimulation, or the extent to which a leader takes risks, challenges assumptions, and encourages follower creativity, and (d) individualized consideration, which is characterized by follower mentoring, attending to follower needs, and listening to follower concerns (p. 559).

That is to say, a leader does not work alone and takes into account the needs, interests, suggestions, and ideas of his/her followers that are in consonance with a common goal. It is essential for a leader to consider collaborative work to advance in the achievement of important objectives considering some essential elements proposed by Mattessich and Monsey (1992) such as Mutual respect, understanding, trust, and open and frequent communication to have a successful collaborative work. Allowing teamwork will be more efficient for leaders, since they will be able to embrace more studies to put into action. As a matter of fact, the lack of teamwork might be a reason why there is a lack in an investigation about certain topics present in schools, for example, diversity. Barry., et al.





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(2004) expressed: “The lack of analysis of differences arising from disability, age, sexual orientation and other statuses in relation to education is accompanied by other limitations in research and policy” (p.13) In this respect, having a collaborative teamwork of leaders will impact differently in diversity because there will be more planning and executions. In this regard, the teamwork during our formative process in the course provided us with chances to expand our perspectives by considering each other mindset and opinions to achieve the same goal. This process has improved our capacity for change and adaptability to different situations in which we showed our capabilities and weaknesses as a leader to keep improving.

The following are questions directed to our future as leader teachers. Though these questions have not been answered yet, they are clearer now due to our understanding of the course.

- How does teamwork contribute to improving the education field?
- How do teacher leaders influence students and colleagues?
- What is the best way to involve ourselves with what we desire to improve?

Leadership empowerment and implications for the future





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Talking about leadership empowerment is talking about growth, knowledge, and autonomy. Therefore, leadership empowerment is “the process of delegating autonomy, and responsibility to subordinates and sharing power with them through a series of leadership behaviors to increase their inner motivation” (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015 as cited in Atik & Celik, 2020, p. 178). That is to say, leadership empowerment in schools is more than having authority or making individual decisions; it is about involving all the participants in the educational scenario and giving them participation in the educational process. In this sense, leadership empowerment transcends gender, sex, age, and roles barrier by giving every individual involved in the educational context and community. In this regard, leadership empowerment should be an intrinsic behavior that comes from a leader influencing others for the benefit and the accomplishment of objectives.

In other words, empowerment should be used by the leader not to command but to motivate and engage people in the same direction and purpose. For this, Arnold et al., 2000 as cited in Cheong et al., 2018) identified five empowering leadership dimensions as follows: “leading by example, participative decision making, coaching, informing, and showing individual concern”. (p. 2). It is necessary that the leader recognizes himself or herself not only as the superior in the process but as a worker also. The leader must





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understand that real empowerment is the engagement and motivation of the community for the same objective.

Working as an empowered leader means influencing positively people around us to work efficiently in the same process by giving them participation and an understanding of their roles in the process. For that, as future empowered teacher leaders, our purpose is to create proper learning and working environments in which every actor in the process, such as teachers, students, parents, the management, or even the headmaster recognizes their role in the learning process and how their voice and participation influences it. First, we must be curriculum leaders by providing the chance for the learners to learn according to their context and needs. Second, everyone is an empowered participant; that is to say, everyone has a role and a voice that must be listened to. Third, knowledge is essential to be empowered. As leaders, we should provide access to the latest advances in science to the people that surround us. Fourth, being open-minded to changes and barriers, only in that way a good leader would face any adversity and understand that the process does not depend only on him or her but on everyone involved in it.





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CONCLUSION

As future leaders, we understand why changes are important and necessary for the environment we are committed to transform. The duty of a leader in the educational field is to provide feedback, recognize skills and motivate others to become better, that means, leaders will always find the tools to help students and co workers who need to improve. Notwithstanding, leaders need to improve themselves as well, as future leaders we know that it is important to develop a constant improvement of our abilities, since these are the ones who will help us to achieve our goals in terms of leadership. A leader who properly analyzes himself is a leader with the capacity to support students with significant teaching and overcome weaknesses observed. As future leaders, we believe in the power of leadership to supply necessities in the educational field.





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